

From: Rouleau, Joseph S
To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
Date: 12/11/01 7:43pm
Subject: Microsoft Antitrust Questions

Dear Justice Department,

As a proposed settlement against a Microsoft, ideas have been publicized that the guilty corporation should merely donate its product (software) or funds to be used for computer-related equipment. Is this truly what children want or need? Arts and sports programs are being cut so that children can learn how to sit in front of a computer terminal, and this antitrust "remedy" only propagates the problem! Microsoft most assuredly deserves a severe fine -- a monetary figure much greater than the figures generally discussed today -- but that money should be donated to schools and charities with no strings attached whatsoever. Schools have many needs far more critical than the latest computer software, and they should use it to address those urgent needs. Knowing that education departments struggle with inadequate budgets, how would Windows-specific computer equipment that may not integrate with their current educational computer systems aid children at all? The goal of education is to foster the talents and interests of children so that they can pursue their dreams and live prosperous lives in society. They should not need to learn a monopolistic corporation's latest software!

In fact, if any stipulation is placed on the use of money Microsoft is forced to donate, it should be that the money NOT be used to purchase computer platform-specific equipment or software. There should be no computer system favoritism in schools. Can't we spare one part of our children's environment that is sheltered from an endless barrage of corporate advertising? Sitting for hours a day in front of a Microsoft computer and then going home to play with a Microsoft X-box or surf the Microsoft .NET with Microsoft Web TV or watch the MSNBC news is the absolute worst future I can imagine for our society. How is Microsoft's plan to be the sole industry leader in all information-related arenas different from George Orwell's Big Brother? But this is precisely what is happening as we allow corporate monopolies and duopolies to set precedents and policies. How quickly the naive consumer will compromise principles and sacrifice his freedoms for the sake of instant satisfaction and convenience. It is left to a wise government to save us from profiteering corporations!!!

Microsoft has clearly demonstrated its disdain for limitations of any kind. In the perfect world, its self limitation would be automatic and there would be no need for sanctions. But in the perfect world we would also have diverse computer operating systems that interface seamlessly; we would have fully operating system-independent hardware. Microsoft Windows today can be sold at literally any price because the world's computer infrastructure is now practically built to operate with Microsoft electrons. Business and

technological diversity, like biodiversity, is necessary for our long-term health and survival. Elimination of Microsoft's domination of all aspects of a consumer's computing experience is not going to be achieved by merely fining them, and it certainly won't be solved by teaching another generation how to use Microsoft software.

Sincerely,

J Rouleau
Bothell, WA

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